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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the impact of Bowling Green State University (BGSU) student teachers on the instructional program of the Whitmer Complex, which is the field component of the BGSU Teacher Learning Center. Although the study population included 10 cooperating teachers and 37 student teachers, the emphasis of the study was on the 619 Whitmer Complex student respondents from grades 8 through 12. A survey questionnaire was used to study three possible impact areas affected by BGSU student teachers: a) amount of individual attention and individualized instruction received by pupils; b) additional ideas, aids, and materials included in the program as a result of BGSU student teachers; and c) performance of cooperating teachers. The tabulation of responses to the questionnaire shows that a) 66.6% of the pupils indicated that the presence of student teachers increased the amount of individualized instruction they received; b) both pupils and cooperating teachers agreed that student teachers provided additional resources for the program; c) 72.9% of the pupils responded that the cooperating teacher was more effective because of the presence of the student teacher; and d) 96.1% of the Whitmer Complex students indicated that the administration should take steps to ensure the continuation of the student teaching program. (HMD)

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HOW ABOUT A TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER? ... ASK THE KIDS

With the teacher education center concept rapidly developing, Deans, researchers and critics are asking for data indicating some degree of success. Ultimately the question is: "Do teacher education centers produce better teachers, as perceived by the schools and communities, than the traditional student teaching programs?" This question will be answered only after long-range multivariate examination of the graduates from center programs. However, it is possible to examine some short-term variables that may indicate possible advantages of a given program. In effect, investigators must determine: (1) What are the characteristics of a successful teacher education center?, and (2) What kinds of evidence are we willing to accept as indicators of success?

A recent study at the Bowling Green State University-Whitmer Complex Teacher Learning Center considered four major variables by asking the pupils in the center, as recipients of the experience, to respond to the variables.[1] The results of the survey have been accepted as initial evidence of success in the continuing evaluation of the program.

The Center

Center organizations and definitions differ widely among universities. The Bowling Green State University-Whitmer Complex Teacher Learning Center is a cooperative approach to teacher education. Student teachers

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are placed in the Whitmer Complex in the four major areas of Social Studies, English, Science and Mathematics. The format for the BGSU Centers places two student teachers with each cooperating teacher to operate as a team in the assigned classes for a period of 11 weeks. Working as a triad, the team members function as resource persons to plan, present, discuss, research and provide learning experiences for pupils. Planned arrangements offer the student teacher a teaming as well as an individual experience.

Twenty to twenty-four student teachers are usually placed in the center. As a major factor of the center program, BGSU provides a full-time, field-based college Clinical Supervisor to (1) supervise the activities of the student teachers, (2) provide in-service activities such as workshops and graduate courses for cooperating teachers and other faculty in the system, (3) offer liaison between the university and the school system, and (4) research and develop new and better methods of learning, teaching, and communicating with kids, parents, teachers and community.

The Whitmer Complex is located north of Toledo bordering the Ohio-Michigan state line. It is part of the Washington Local School District, a portion of which lies within the city boundaries of Toledo. Washington Local Schools is the largest local school district in Ohio with an enrollment of over 11,000 students. The Whitmer Complex is composed of three buildings on a single site under one administrative arrangement. The enrollment in the secondary complex, grades 8 through 12, is approximately 5000 pupils. The Whitmer Complex has instituted and continued development of many new educational programs and tools, and provides a broad range of experiences and activities for pupils and student teachers.

Since the first responsibility of the public school is to the development of it's pupils, it seemed important to recognize the effects of the center

on the school. To this end, a study of the possible impact of the center on the instructional program of the school was instituted to satisfy four major concerns.

(1) As a result of the Bowling Green State University Student Teachers and the center concept, are the pupils in the school receiving more individual attention and/or individualized instruction?

(2) Are the Bowling Green State University Student Teachers bringing new and different materials, new ideas and aids to the Whitmer Complex, and are these materials and ideas being used?

(3) Have the Bowling Green State University Student Teachers had a healthy psychological effect upon the experienced cooperating teachers to increase their performance and increase their effectiveness with pupils?

(4) What should be the attitude of the administration and teachers in the school about student teachers working in the school?

Methodology

The population of the study was composed of: (1) 619 pupils from grades 8-12 of the Whitmer Complex, (2) 10 cooperating teachers, and (3) 37 BGSU student teachers completing the student teaching experience during Fall and Winter Quarters, 1971-1972.

Each pupil, cooperating teacher and student teacher completed similar questionnaires, with questions pertaining specifically to each group and the objectives of the study. The items for the questionnaires were provided from a recent study directed by the Deans and Directors of Michigan Teacher Education Institutions. This "Impact Study" was conducted during the Fall of 1969 to determine the effect of student teaching programs upon cooperating public schools. Educational research consultarts from three different institutions in Michigan were involved in the planning of the study and the development of the survey instruments: A total of 4397 cooperating

teachers and 4483 student teachers responded to the Michigan Survey.[2] For this study, items were selected from the "Impact Study" which were relevant to the center operation. Some items were reworded to fit the local situation and to sample pupils' opinions.

Results

The treatment of the results of the study was limited to absolute and relative frequency response for each group (pupil, cooperating teacher and student teacher). Interest was greatest in the pupils' responses to the four variables tested, and that emphasis is placed here.

Individualized Instruction

The philosophy of the Whitmer Complex includes, "Individualized instruction, developing a program of learning prescribed to the aptitudes, abilities and needs of each individual student." It is assumed that if the people directly involved in the program perceive this to be happening, then the Center is possibly having an impact on the school's instructional program. When questioned about individualized instruction, pupils (N = 619) responded as indicated in Tables 1 - 4.

Table 1 -- Because of the Student Teacher's Presence, To What Extent Did You Receive Work (instruction, counseling, tutoring,) As An Individual Pupil?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)
Positive Response	562	90.8
Negative Response	52	8.4
Undecided	5	0.8
Totals	619	100

Valid Observations N=619

Table 2 -- Because of the Student Teacher's Presence, To What Extent Did Your Teacher Work With You As An Individual Pupil As Compared To When He Does Not Have A Student Teacher?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)	Cumulative Frequency (percent)
More	159	25.7	25.7
Same	264	42.6	68.3
Less	88	14.2	82.5
Undecided	108	17.4	99.9
Totals	619	99.9	99.9

Valid Observations N=619

Table 3 -- To What Extent Was the Amount of Small Group Instruction for the Students Changed Because of the Student Teacher's Presence?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)	Cumulative Frequency (percent)
More	408	65.9	65.9
Same	184	29.7	95.6
Less	27	4.4	100.0
Totals	619	100	100

Valid Observations N=619

Table 4 -- To What Extent Was the Individual Attention To, or Tutoring of, Pupils Changed Because of The Student Teacher's Presence?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)	Cumulative Frequency (percent)
More	412	66.6	66.6
Same	174	28.1	94.7
Less	33	5.3	100.0
Totals	619	100.0	100.0

Valid Observations N=619

Pupils perceived receiving more work as individuals as well as receiving the same or more help from cooperating teachers as a result of the student teacher's presence. A high majority of the pupils, 94.7%, felt that individual attention to pupils changed because of the student teachers' presence. It should be noted the data indicated considerable agreement among pupils, cooperating teachers and student teachers that more individualized instruction and individual attention was provided for pupils involved in the program. There was agreement that the program structure allowed for greater opportunities in individualization and that these opportunities were being accepted by all groups concerned. The cooperating teacher was available for individual work as participation in the team permitted more time for these activities. The chances for individual counseling, instruction, tutoring and small group instruction were greater because of the additional personnel. Student teachers were presented with many opportunities for individualization and the pupils in the school were perceiving this as an advantage.

Student Teachers as A Source of New and Different Ideas and Materials

One of the proposed benefits of the center concept was the promise of increased resourses for classroom instruction. As a center, the public school, in effect, acquires direct access to the instructional and material assets of the Bowling Green State University Library and Instructional Media Center as student teachers take advantage of their services. Even though the pupils were not always involved in planning, they appeared to have perceived that student teachers were providing these benefits and that the aids were being used. Cooperating teachers were especially aware of these additional resources and unanimously agreed that there was an increase in ideas and materials available for classroom utilization. Pupils responded to inquires as displayed in Tables 5 - 7.

Table 5 -- Did the Student Teacher Bring, Develop, Provide, or Suggest Any New or Different Instructional Materials?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)
Positive Response	436	70.4
Negative Response	66	10.7
Don't Know	117	18.9
Totals	619	100.0

Valid Observations N=619

Table 6 -- Did the Student Teacher Suggest or Provide Any Other Kinds of Aid or Ideas?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)
Positive Response	455	73.5
Negative Response	70	11.3
Don't Know	94	15.2
Totals	619	100.0

Valid Observations N=619

Table 7 -- Were the Contributions Received and Used?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)
Positive Response	493	79.6
Negative Response	114	18.4
Don't Know	12	1.9
Totals	619	99.9

Valid Observations N=619

The Impact of Student Teachers on the Effectiveness of Cooperating Teachers

It was hypothesized that student teachers might have a healthy psychological effect upon experienced teachers as they inspire the experienced professionals to greater performance. As a result, cooperating teachers could be expected to become more effective in completing their commonly recognized and defined responsibilities in the classroom. Pupils perceived this to be happening as indicated in Table 8.

Table 8 -- What effect Do You Feel Working With Student Teachers Has Had on the Performance of the Supervising Teacher?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)
More Effective	451	72.9
No Effect	154	24.9
Less Effective	10	1.6
Don't Know	4	0.6
Totals	619	100.0

Valid Observations N=619

Presumably, if a pupil recognizes more individual attention from the teacher, and new and different activities and materials, the cooperating teacher will be perceived as being more effective in providing the learning experience. Consequently, student and parental satisfaction should increase.

Suggestions as to the Attitude of Administration and Teachers Toward Student Teaching

Persons not involved in the Center program have indicated that there might be negative feelings towards student teachers and student teaching by the pupils in the school. When asked how they felt about this, the pupils responded as indicated in Table 9. Five hundred ninety-five pupils (96.1%) indicated the student teaching program should be continued.

Table 9 -- What Do You Think Should Be the Attitude of the Administration and Teachers in the School About Working With Student Teachers?

	Absolute Frequency (number)	Relative Frequency (percent)
Positive Response	595	96.1
Negative Response	24	3.9
Totals	619	100.0

Valid Observations N=619

Summary and Conclusions

The Bowling Green State University Teacher Learning Center is devised as a cooperative approach to teacher education beneficial to pupils, teachers, schools, student teachers and the university. It is assumed that if the program can increase individualized instruction and attention to pupils, provide additional resources in ideas and materials to be used with the pupils, and increase the effectiveness of the supervising teachers in their interaction with pupils, it will be an indication of success. For the study, it appeared improbable to measure these variables in terms of pupil gain, so evaluation consisted of surveying the perceptions of those most closely involved in the program.

The results of the survey appear to be acceptable, initial evidence of success in the center approach as opposed to the traditional program which does not offer the same characteristics of multiple placement, teaming, full-time supervisory aid, and school-based in-service programs. Pupils, cooperating teachers, and student teachers agree as to the value of the program in meeting the four stated objectives or concerns. Five hundred sixty -

two pupils (90.8%) felt they were receiving individualized instruction because of the student teachers' presence. Approximately two - thirds of the pupils surveyed indicated they were receiving more individual attention. Approximately 80% of the pupils felt the new ideas and materials brought to the school by student teachers were being used. About three - fourths of the pupils responded that cooperating teachers had become more effective as teachers as a result of the student teachers' presence. As a further indication of their support, 96.1% of the pupils polled indicated the program should continue with the administration and teachers seeking and accepting student teachers in the school. This study appears to indicate the Bowling Green State University - Whitmer Complex Teacher Learning Center is having a favorable impact on the instructional program of the school.

As stated, any final determination of success will be approached only after valid investigations of teaching center graduates and their impacts on children and schools. Critics might say the evidence gathered thus far is too slight and subjective to be of value, and that the efforts expended in the center approach are not justified by research evidence. However, each small bit of data will add to the total and in time the results will be in. Samples initially obtained are exciting enough to go forward, and research efforts on many other variables will continue at the fifteen Bowling Green Teacher Learning Centers.

REFERENCES

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